

APPROVED: January 10, 2012

**Rockville Environment Commission
Minutes of the Meeting of Tuesday, December 13, 2011
Held at the Rockville City Hall, 111 Maryland Avenue**

Attendance

Commissioners: John Becker, Julie Palakovich Carr, Kris Dighe, Anne Goodman, Beri Kravitz and Clark Reed

Absent: Steve Cardon, Alicia Hosmer and Devinie Lye

Guests: Mark Charles, Environmental Management

Erica Shingara, Environmental Management

Jessica Weiss, growing SOUL and Montgomery County Food Council

Eric Siegel, growing SOUL and Cohen Companies

Joe Arrowsmith, Resident

Meeting Commencement

The meeting convened at 7:32 pm by Chair Dighe.

Introductions of Commissioners and Guests were made.

King Farm Property Options

The City of Rockville has been the owner of the King Farm farmhouse, barns and immediate grounds for the past 12 years. One barn on the property is currently used by Bikes of the World; and the City uses some of the other buildings for storage. The farmhouse has been empty. The City, through a request for information (RFI), has been exploring options to bring more tenants to the property.

Jessica Weiss and Eric Siegel, representing *growing SOUL*, attended the meeting and discussed their original vision for the property – to create an urban sustainability and learning center. It was also noted that as many as 30% of Montgomery County students are at risk for hunger. Growing SOUL estimates it will take \$300,000-400,000 to renovate the farm and barns for use – and that assumes that the property is connected to water and sewer.

The enterprise has reconsidered its vision in light of a September community meeting with approximately 30 residents of King Farm, many of whom opposed the project for a variety of reasons. Growing SOUL is now pursuing a similar proposal in the Suitland area of Prince George's County. Growing SOUL did believe that a very modest presence was still possible (starting with a vermiculture composting demonstration project) at the Rockville property.

Sustainable Maryland Certified

Erica Shingara briefed the Commission on Rockville's ongoing efforts to pursue this certification from the Maryland Municipal League and the University of Maryland.

The Citizen Survey instrument is now completed and is being reviewed by the City Public Information Office. The program website is also on track. Both are expected to be launched in January. Five Commissioners volunteered to be video recorded explaining the survey and its importance.

Erica distributed a draft matrix of the steps required to secure points toward certification and requested Commissioners to aid in the preparation of factsheet-descriptions of work completed or nearing completion. Several Commissioners volunteered for these topics and provided feedback on the matrix itself. Erica will revise and redistribute it.

A brainstorming session on the vision and goals for the sustainability program will be scheduled for the January 2012 meeting.

High Performance Building Tax Credit

On November 8, 2010 and the Mayor and Council instructed staff to develop a draft ordinance (City Code Chapter 22) to authorize the credit as part of the FY 2013 budget. The Commission discussed how the credit will work and specifically debated whether a credit holder had to maintain Energy Star certification while they were receiving their tax credit. There was consensus that ongoing certification was not needed. However, a tax credit holder must maintain (and not backslide in their energy efficiency performance) while receiving the tax credit. Of course, nothing prevents a building owner from pursuing additional energy improvements thereby making them eligible for additional tax credits. The Code Amendment is now scheduled to be introduced at the Mayor and Council meeting of January 23, 2012.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the November 8, 2011 meeting were reviewed. Palakovich Carr moved approval and Kravitz seconded without revisions. The Commission approved the minutes 6-0-0.

Due to the lateness of the hour, all remaining agenda items, including a pending Environmental Excellence Award, a follow-up discussion on the Commission's October Strategic Retreat, Committee Reports, and a discussion of single-family vs. multi-family program incentives were deferred to the January 2012 meeting.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10:07 pm by unanimous acclamation.

Next Commission Meeting

The next Commission meeting is *tentatively* scheduled for **Tuesday, January 10, 2012 at 7:30 pm** in the **Diamondback Conference Room** of the **Rockville City Hall, 111 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, Maryland, 20850**. The public is invited to attend.